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## TherapyEdge and RightToCare Successfully Launch the New TherapyEdge™ Down Referral Software Patient Management System

JOHANNESBURG--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--TherapyEdge ABL and Right to Care are pleased to announce the first year experience of down referral (DR) using its proprietary patient management electronic record system named *TherapyEdge™ Down Referral Module*, presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> Southern African AIDS conference (Durban, April 2009).

The poster # 269 is describing the successful implementation of a Decision Support and Management Electronic System (TherapyEdge™) for Down Referral of HIV Patients on HAART to a Primary Health Care (PHC) Centre in South Africa. Few patients were lost to follow up (<2%) and 70% of defaulters were traced and are back in care, maintaining the HIV patients' data simultaneously over the network of initiation (PHC and sister clinic sites). HIV treatment monitoring by PHC nurses shows that a task shifting model is possible when facilitated by an expert system under the supervision of the trained health workers. More details about the one-year experience available at [http://www.ablsa.com/site/en/product\\_rc.html](http://www.ablsa.com/site/en/product_rc.html).

In response to the global HIV crisis, TherapyEdge and Right to Care have developed a model of care for antiretroviral therapy treated patients from treatment initiation sites to primary health care centers, an activity which is termed "Down Referral". Down Referral is a mechanism to increase access to care for large numbers of patients requiring Anti-RetroViral (ARV) therapy in resource poor countries with a high prevalence of HIV-1 infection, and a shortage of trained health workers. The high demand for services coupled with limited human resources creates an incredible strain on health professionals and HIV clinics. Down referral to primary health care sites often ensures that patients receive treatment within walking distance of their homes, reducing the financial burden associated with transport and loss of income for clinic visits. Access to treatment sites is essential to treatment continuity and adherence.

RightToCare and TherapyEdge actively cooperated to develop innovative solutions for efficiently scaling up the ARV program using decentralized ARV procurement network to existing primary health care clinics and at the same time maintain optimal control and traceability of the HIV patient, optimal disease management under the supervision of the medical doctors, and reduce the HIV patient's "lost-to-follow-up".

The *TherapyEdge™ Down Referral Module* uses data collections and decision support based innovations, coupled with simple real-time connectivity, which are at the level of every HIV clinic in emerging countries. It helps ensure close monitoring of the HIV patients at every step of the down referred procedure

"This new patient management tool development is vital if we are going to reach the target set by President Zuma of 80% ARV treatment for all those in need, or 3 million patients on treatment by 2011, yet maintain optimal disease management without loss-to-follow-up" says Professor Ian Sanne, Managing Director at Right to Care, and Associate Professor Infectious Disease University of the Witwatersrand. Sanne's reference is to the government's National Strategic Plan 2007-2011, announced in 2007, and supported by President Zuma.

By efficiently decentralizing treatment, the systemized down referral model of care, facilitated by the decision and management electronic system will enable the expansion of ARV provision through existing primary health care infrastructure and primary health care nurses.

Improved service delivery and electronic information systems deployed at sites including shorter waiting times, planned pharmacy supply, and has led to larger quantities of patients seen by trained primary health nurses and counselors.

The extension of this model to other sites, including private practitioners, could be a major step forward in managing South Africa's ambitious ARV roll out program, and will provide ongoing provision of technical assistance to government policy makers in HIV care and treatment.

**Relevant links:**

[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/global\\_health/aids/TechAreas/caresupport/arvfactsheet.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/aids/TechAreas/caresupport/arvfactsheet.html)

<http://www.righttocare.org/content/view/full/50/85/>

**About RightToCare:** Right to Care is a non-profit (Section 21) company in South Africa established in 2001. Its aim is to build public- and private-sector capacity for the provision of affordable antiretroviral therapy. [www.righttocare.org](http://www.righttocare.org)

**About TherapyEdge, Inc. and ABL, S.A.:** Advanced Biological Laboratories (ABL) is a biotech company founded in 2000 as a spin-off from the European academic research centre, CRP-Santé, Luxembourg. and in 2004, acquired the control of TherapyEdge, Inc. TherapyEdge is a biotech company founded in 2000 as a spin-off from Triangle Pharmaceuticals, Inc., which had been acquired by Gilead Sciences in December 2002. TherapyEdge and ABL's expertise lies within infectious diseases, with particular focus on resistance patterns and clinical outcome predictors for HIV-1, tuberculosis, hepatitis, malaria and human papillomavirus (HPV) infections. <http://www.therapyedge.com>

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